

Profile of a health corp. : BBAHC

IHS budget cuts and threatened program changes have reeked havoc with the Regional Health Corporations in recent years. The following narrative from the BBAHC 1982 Annual Report is a description of just such a Regional Health Corporation and outlines how its programs have been affected by change.

The Bristol Bay Area Health Corporation is a private, non-profit, Native organization incorporated in the State of Alaska in June, 1973, to raise the health status of the people of the region.

The communities served are the 30 villages within the region, and 2 villages from the Calista Region, Platinum and Goodnews Bay. The region encompasses an area in Southwest Alaska of 40,000 square miles.

The Corporation has a contract with the Indian Health Service to provide services to the Native population of the region. The amount of the contract is generally dependent on the level of Congressional appropriation for the national Indian Health Service programs.

Other sources of funds for the Corporation programs are fees paid by patients for services and grants from the State of Alaska.

COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICES

Funding cutbacks hindered most programs this year. The Bay and Peninsula Clinic was without funding, but now seems stable for another year. The CHR program suffered a 20.4% cut with a lot of talk about eliminating the program altogether.

The great uncertainty surrounding CHR funding has seriously hampered planning efforts and demoralized staff members. Many CHRs have sought other jobs. Other federal programs suffered 5% cuts over 1981 funding levels. Considering inflation, this represents significant cuts in programs. The lack of adequate funding and the uncertainty of funding have been very stressful for staff. Staff members are to be commended for their efforts.

These programs are:
**Community Health
Aide Program**

Bay and Peninsula Clinic
Emergency Medical Service
Alcohol Treatment Services
Alcohol Safety
Action Program
Mental Health Services
Environmental Health
Community Injury
Control Program

HOSPITAL SERVICES

The Bristol Bay Area Hospital at Kanakanak has 28 beds with an occupancy rate in FY82 of 23.7% and provides inpatient and ambulatory medical care to people in 27 villages of the Bristol Bay Health Corporation service area. The other five villages in the Iliamna area are in the

Anchorage Service Unit. Plans are proceeding to replace the hospital building with a modern facility within the next few years, as the present building is crowded and no longer meets hospital building code requirements.

In 1980 the Corporation assumed management of the facility under a Self-Determination contract with the IHS. Decreased federal funding for BBAHC has made it difficult to meet all community expectations and carry out a smooth transition.

Medical services are provided by 2 physicians and a physician assistant, a decrease from the previous staff level of three physicians and four positions. This decision was made to

meet the reduction in the operating budget provided by the IHS.

Contrary to national and state trends, the hospital at K Kanakanak has experienced an increase in inpatient and outpatient utilization, especially during the summer commercial fishing season. Financial cutbacks in the operating budget and the increased utilization has placed considerable strain both on personnel and facilities.

Dental Services

Provision of service was hampered by the 3-month vacancy in the staff dentist position and the elimination of the clinic's receptionist position due to budget reductions.